

Based on a True Story

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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Abstract

Through four short episodic scripts I shall expose and explore the impact that stereotypes and inadequate and inaccurate representation have on a small town through the experience of a script writing protagonist. The writer, while working to overcome his guilt at selling out his friends for the money and fame, undergoes a journey of self-reflection that not only allows him to look beyond himself, but helps him understand what he values and why true and diverse stories are important. This work while, drawing attention to cycles of misrepresentation and erasure, creates an opportunity for conversation, not just for people within the television industry, but for the public in general, and showcases our responsibility as content creators and consumers.

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Process Analysis Statement

As a writer, I have the desire to create the next big hit, tell the next great story, create something that will be remembered. Looking at the industry and the lack of diversified voices and stories makes it easy to think that this lack of diversity is what sells and what audiences want to see. These scripts try to challenge that mindset. Through the protagonist Clay's self-reflection on his motivation and values, this work gives a unique insight into the mindset of the author and shows just how easy it is to go with the flow, make content that is safe, and that follows the rules or stereotypes that we know work and sell.

The importance of accurate representation has been the foundation for most of the courses I have taken here at Ball State. It's the focus on my major and a personal passion, one that I hope to carry into the television industry. It was with this passion and mindset that I embarked upon this project. Initially, I had intended to write scripts that focused solely on the stories and voices of groups that are underrepresented, misrepresented, or missing altogether from the small and the large screen. However, as I began writing, the story quickly shifted focus.

While I was dedicated and adamant about showcasing the issues and sharing stories and perspectives of those affected, the story became about more than that. It became about some of the underlying reasons that these representation issues exist and then more specifically about my responsibility as a writer to acknowledge, understand, and address these issues. During this process, in an assigned reading for one of my courses this semester, really reaffirmed the new direction these scripts had taken and put the work that I was doing for this project into perspective. The line was about the creator of *Orange Is the New Black*, a show which is challenging norms, breaking down barriers, and tackling issues that are often ignored or invisible in society. Even with the incredible success this show has seen, the creator of the show expressed

that she believes she would never have been able to pitch a show that focused on Latina or Black women in prison. That line just reinforced for me that not only is change is necessary, that the struggle and misrepresentation and lack of representation that I discuss in my scripts are accurate to reality, but that we as creators have our work cut out for us.

An integral part of this thesis process was creating the beat sheet. A beat sheet is a way to organize the timeline of the story as well as flesh out the plot points and charge values of each scene. In essence, it's a way to determine what is happening in each scene, how it affects the characters, what are the character's mindsets are in each scene, and how the scene affect the next one. Understanding this structure, I was able to jump into the scripts and create these characters that I have grown quite fond of. While I am slightly disappointed I didn't get to go as in depth with each character and explore their stories, the way that I structured the script leaves it open to be continued. Moving forward with the project I do hope to write more scripts in the series that explore the different characters and their perspectives, not limiting the protagonist of the story to just Clay but giving everyone that power and influence.

In all, this project helped me explore some of the issues in my industry and gave me a better understanding of the obstacles I will face after graduation. It was also a great way to explore my role and the ways that I can help enact change and better avoid contributing to the issues of representation in my future work. While I found myself at times falling into the trap of stereotypes and clichés, thanks to this work and the courses I have taken at Ball State, I am far better equipped to notice and avoid these pitfalls. Having never tackled a project as complex and comprehensive as this one, it was also exciting to be able to explore and develop my writing process. Being able to go through more revisions and receive more feedback than there is time

for in a scriptwriting class was incredibly rewarding. I was able to push my own personal boundaries and the process helped me look beyond myself while exploring my passion.

The hope is these scripts will be a barrier breaker, uniting a plethora of voices, showcasing a diversified group of experiences, and acting as a mirror for self-reflection. When reading these scripts, I hope the audience thinks about the way they create and consume media content and moving forward they become more cognizant of the pitfalls, temptations, and obstacles of creating and producing content as well as the role they play in what is created. Basically, we have to demand more from ourselves and others. There can be no more excuses, no more now's not the time, no more it's someone else's problem, and no more accepting less than what we as an audience and we as a society deserve. It's time to determine what we value in terms of representation and take responsibility for making that happen.

Based on A True Story Beat Sheet

1. **EPISODE 1** Opening Scene: (The show within the show.) EXT. ROSE HAVEN-TELEVISION SERIES- EVENING An old, faded, but well-kept town sign “Rose Haven population 235, Home of Marble Sanatorium.” VO (over series of shots)- “A town whose history is riddled with grisly deaths and intense suffering now maintained as a symbol of architectural and human triumph, Rose Haven is a snapshot of a bygone era kept alive by the hard work and dedication of thirty-five descendants of Rose Haven’s most ardent mental health reformers.”” Series of shots happening during the voice over of a few of the townspeople: ACTOR MARK EARLY, ACTOR CASSIDY ISSACS, ACTOR HUNTER HAVEN, ACTOR BLAIRE GRANT, ACTOR JESSIE ELLIOT, who will play a role in the real world.
2. INT. COMMUNITY CENTER- EVENING – REALITY (Inciting Incident) After a few moments of watching the show, it stops. Cut to reality. CLAYTON WATERS, early 30’s, a stock photo come to life, the one everybody knows but no one remembers, sits as if on a throne in the front row of folding chairs directly in front of a sheet hanging from the ceiling. Looking around, the small gathering of TOWNSPEOPLE are all in varying states of distress. Most just stare in shock at the curtain. Jessie, Clay’s best friend, stands at a projector, not making eye contact. Clay asks what happened to the feed, and all hell breaks loose. Everyone is incredibly upset at the way they have been portrayed. Clayton, having written a script that he thought would sell and be successful, not one that was true to his friends and their experiences, is confused then incredibly defensive. He calls for Jessie to back him up. Jessie is gone.
3. INT. JESSIE’S GARAGE- LATER (Plot Point 1) Clay walks into Jessie’s garage straight to the fridge and grabs a beer. He starts rambling on about how crazy everyone was acting. Realizing something is wrong Clay lashes out at Jessie talking about how he/ all of them should be grateful. Jessie responds drolling out some information about their backstory as friends and how this story affects him. Clay isn’t ready to accept he’s done anything wrong, storms off.
4. EXT. ROSIE’S HOUSE – NIGHT Clay paces outside a small house contemplating knocking. He knocks, ROSIE, the town historian opens the door and invites him in.
5. INT. ROSIE’S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS They sit drinking, having a back and forth conversation about Clayton’s perceptions and the blinders he has unconsciously put up between himself and his world. His perception of her versus her reality. Her descriptions of those shown in the clip versus reality. All in VO over Clayton walking through town and seeing those he hurt.
6. EXT. ROSE HAVEN DINER – MORNING Cassidy is having coffee with her wife CHARLIE. Rosie and Clay discuss how Cassidy in the show was stripped of her power and position and was turned into eye candy half her age who’s only purpose was to be a love interest for a powerful man. Clay defends his decision. “It’s cliché to have the bitchy middle aged female boss.” Cassidy gives Clay the cold shoulder when she sees him.
7. EXT. PARK – DAY Mark feeds birds in an empty park. Clay defends his decision to not only change Mark’s personal character from sweet older man to young arrogant CEO but

also from African American to white claiming the truth would have played to a different demographic than the producers wanted.

8. TOWN SQUARE – CONTINUOUS Clay, still not accepting that he's done anything wrong and defending his decisions sees HUNTER, mid 20's, listening to music on a bench with a hoodie on. Clay claims he did Hunter a favor even after learning he has a crush on Blaire.
9. BLAIRE'S GADGETS – CONTINUOUS BLAIRE, mid 20's, perfect makeup, trendy clothes, is pissed and locks Clay out of her shop. Her reaction causes him to really start looking at his neighbors and his town. He's floundering trying to justify what he did but is slowly losing steam.
10. EXT. JESSIE'S HOUSE – NIGHT Clay has run out of excuses and is starting to accept responsibility. He goes to Jessie's to apologize. Step one in his journey of accepting responsibility.
11. INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN – SAME Clay tries to pass responsibility onto the producers. No nonsense Rosie isn't having any of it. Clay heads out determined. Since all of the previous beats occur after he leaves Rosie's, at this moment he isn't convinced to do anything yet, however, he is in a more open-minded head space and is willing to at least consider taking responsibility.
12. INT. – CLAYTON'S OFFICE – EVENING Post it notes, index cards, grainy home printed cell phone pictures of the town and townspeople, arranged chaotically around the room. Clayton sits in a little nook in front of a window illuminated by his laptop. Frantically typing, he's trying to tell Jessie's story as the first episode of season two. He keeps second guessing himself, his desire to continue the success of the show and do what is easy, battling against his desire to make amends and tell the truth. His phone interrupts him. Josh the producer calls for an update.
13. INT. JOSH'S OFFICE – SAME A glimpse of the dazzling life that Clay has been dreaming of and that was driving his work. JOSH GADGE, late 40's, false charm and all business wants Clay's season two draft to be the same as season one. MILES KELNER, Josh's boss sits in on the call.
14. INT. CLAY'S HOME OFFICE – CONTINUOUS Will Clay choose his wallet and make the producer happy or stay true to reality and appropriately represent his friends? He keeps working on the script with little indication of his choice.
15. EXT. JESSIE'S HOUSE- LATER (Low of Low's) Clay chooses his friends and tries to share his improved script with Jessie. Jessie rejects him without looking at the script.
16. EXT. ROSE HAVEN STREETS- EARLY MORNING Clay despondent wavers in his conviction to right his wrongs. Tempted by Josh again he almost throws away the script giving up. A magazine, the actor who plays Jessie on the cover keeps him on track.
17. SERIES OF SHOTS – He delivers the scripts and a note calling people to a meeting.
18. INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - EVENING A handful of townspeople show up, Cassidy isn't one of them. Clay hides in a corner. Jessie isn't there. Clay looks at his watch, INSERT: 6:10, (where is he?) Shuffling toward the circle of chairs no one really notices Clay approach. Clay standing at the edge of the circle. Jessie throws open the doors making a beeline for Clay. (Oh Shit!) Clay is the center of attention now. Jessie

reservedly shows his support and new lack of animosity. Clayton sits, no longer on a throne, and asks for feedback.

19. EXT. ROSE HAVEN – SAME A tour bus comes rolling past the Rose Haven town sign full to bursting with fans, their cameras out and decked out in merchandise from the show.
20. **EPISODE 2** INT. COMMUNITY CENTER – EVENING Same meeting from the previous episode just a slight time jump. Mark's story about his ancestors. Clay takes copious notes. Cassidy bursts in alerting the group about the busload of fans.
21. EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER – CONTINUOUS They watch the bus head toward town square. Reactions vary from curiosity to full out panic. Clay gets slightly caught up in the hype and celebrity of the moment, but his friends help keep him grounded. Trying to stay ahead of the situation Clay leads a delegation to follow the bus.
22. EXT. ROSE HAVEN STREETS – EVENING The FANS are wandering around taking selfies with everything. MARK FANGIRL, woman, early 20's, wearing a "Team Mark" shirt, runs into the real Mark. Clay's first hand look at how he's virtually erased his friends from their own story is overshadowed by the panic of having all of these tourists wandering around their town, also Josh is loving the tourism hype adding pressure on Clay to play up the false reality he has created.
23. INT. ROSEHAVEN'S FAMILY DINER – BATHROOM- LATER Clay struggles with telling the fans the truth or trying to maintain the image of the show. Juggling the pressure from the town and from Josh he makes a weak plea to the townspeople to play up the show and pretend to be at least a bit like the characters.
24. INT. ROSEHAVEN'S FAMILY DINER – DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS A small group of townspeople, are crammed into the restaurant, Cassidy and Mark help everyone come up with a plan on how to handle these new tourists. Clay tries to get them to consider the pros and cons of telling the truth versus maintaining a façade that matches the show. Cassidy is outspoken against Clay's plan. What are we going to do?
25. INT. SANATORIUM – MORNING Cassidy, Mark, Blaire, and Hunter have to prove their identity to the fans. Clay finally sees just how much he is asking his friends to do for him and what he has done to them. He offers an apology to everyone and takes responsibility for misleading the public.
26. EXT. SANTAORIUM – AFTERNOON Standing in front of the bus, Clay signs autographs and takes selfies with a handful of fans, some fans resolutely sit on the bus ignoring him. They have conversations about what the fans are going to do with the truth. Clay has resigned himself to the fact that he can't keep the truth a secret for the sake of the show.
27. INT. COMMUNITY CENTER – EVENING The town comes together to make a plan about handling more tourists. Clay is a vocal supporter of showing the true Rose Haven and everyone in it. (FALSE VICTORY) Clay gets a message from Josh, he's coming to Rose Haven Friday and he isn't happy.
28. **EPISODE 3** INT. CASSIDY'S OFFICE – DAY Clay interviews Cassidy for season two. She is still a little cautious, but he has proven to her that he is really trying, and she is

- trusting him to do the right thing. She shares her experience as a woman working toward a position of power and the obstacles she faced as a member of the LGBTQ community.
29. EXT. CAFÉ- MORNING Clay, feeling good, sits typing away drinking his coffee. He is confronted by Hunter. The next episode of season one has aired, and the anger and tension is back.
30. EXT. TOWNSQUARE – LATE MORNING Josh shows up to handle the “misrepresentation” issue.
31. INT. ROSEHAVEN’S FAMILY DINER- DAY Josh preaches damage control and “getting Clay’s people in line.” Josh lays out a plethora of options to help stem, contain, or spin the backlash from the truth coming to light. Clay struggles to stand up for himself and the town. Clay believes he’s convinced Josh that his ideas for season two are what they should use to salvage the PR situation.
32. EXT. TOWN SQUARE – AFTERNOON Josh crushes Clay’s hope that they’re going to use season two and pushes him once again to convince the townspeople to play pretend. Clay begins to believe Josh, that this is the only option. The tourism isn’t going as well as they all hoped, and the townspeople are quickly becoming fed up with the whole situation making Clay’s job that much harder.
33. INT. ROSIE’S KITCHEN – AFTERNOON Rosie and Jessie are discussing the impact the show has had on their fundraising benefit for the sanatorium. Clay is overwhelmed by his guilt and feels defeated. He tries to convince Jessie, Rosie, and Mark to help him implement some of Josh’s ideas. Will they help him?
34. EXT. TOWN SQUARE – EVENING A camera crew sets up for some interviews. Rosie, Mark, and Jessie show up to support Clay. Clay seeing his friends love and support finally gets a handle on his guilt and refuses to sell out no matter the cost to himself. Clay finally realizes he’s not been putting the town first, but his own needs and desires and he stands up to Josh. Clay cuts ties with Josh knowing it could ruin his career and get the show cancelled.
35. INT. CLAY’S OFFICE – NIGHT A Laptop screen shows a news anchor announcing the show has officially been cancelled. What will Clay do now? How can he ever tell their real stories?
36. **EPISODE 4** INT. ROSIE’S KITCHEN – EVENING Clay, Rosie, Mark, and Jessie play cards. Clay is still trying to come to terms with what the shows cancellation means for his career and the script he was working on. Mark, Rosie, and Jessie help guide his to realize he shouldn’t give up on himself.
37. INT. CLAY’S HOME OFFICE – MORNING Clay decides not to give up. This time he’s working on the scripts for the right reason. It’s not about glory or money, but because this story needs to be told. Clay sits working like a madman on his script. He has his cell phone, notebook pages, and printed script pages scattered everywhere. He pauses in his typing and pushes play on his phone.
38. INT. BLAIRE’S SHOP – DAY Blaire talking about her love of electronics and programming. She discusses the struggles she faced in what is considered a “man’s” field. Clay apologizes fully realizing the impact his initial script had on her life, and the power that his writing has.

39. INT. CLAY'S HOME OFFICE – MORNING Clay types quickly. Stopping he shuffles some papers and fast forwards the recorder to a specific time.
40. EXT. RESTURANT – EVENING VO of Hunter talking about Blaire and how much he likes her and how the show made it so much harder to talk to her because he was insecure enough without feeling inadequate in comparison to some attractive actor. We watch Hunter work up the courage to ask Blaire out, and Blaire let down her guard and tough exterior enough to say yes.
41. INT. CLAY'S HOME OFFICE – AFTERNOON Another interview cued up with Clay typing away and checking notes and pictures.
42. INT. ROSEHAVEN'S FAMILY DINER – AFTERNOON Clay realizes he has so much more to learn and is seeing firsthand how long he has lived with blinders on when looking at his friends. He asks Elaine about her Native American family history and the Native American history of Rose Haven. Elaine helps Clay realize that this whole process has been about Clay's self-reflection and his journey to understanding his impact not only on the town but on society and understanding himself and his motivations and values.
43. INT. CLAY'S HOME OFFICE – MORNING Clay unshaven, disheveled, same clothes, empty soda bottles and coffee cups, ignores someone knocking on his door. Rosie barges in and helps Clay get the scripts ready to be mailed.
44. INT. COMMUNITY CENTER – EVEINING A general town meeting addressing events that are coming up, how the sanatorium's benefit went and how they've been using/being impacted by the crazy publicity. Clay is struggling with all the rejections and even though things seem to be working out alright for the town he still feels like he hasn't done enough and that he's failed them.
45. INT. CLAY'S HOME OFFICE – MORNING A last ditch effort, Clay scrolls through his phone and dials a number. Calling Miles, Josh's boss, he asks for a meeting. We don't hear the other side of the conversation.
46. INT. OFFICE BUILDING – MILES' OFFICE - AFTERNOON Clay, nervous, in a nice outfit tries not to fidget. Miles flips through a script on his desk, asks Clay to tell him about the story.
47. MONTAGE OF ROSEHAVEN – CLAY VO of his pitch to Miles. He talks about the rich history or everyone in the town and how their story is the one that needs to be told. Snapshots of the real townspeople like the opening of the first episode but just them being themselves.
48. INT. OFFICE BUILDING – MILE'S OFFICE- CONTINUOUS Clay talks about how he messed up and how this script is about him, a writer falling prey to the easy way of doing things and giving in to the temptation of money and fame to forget what the story he was trying to tell was really supposed to be about. It's really about an author finding his way and being willing to realize when he is wrong and being brave enough to try and fix it.
49. SERIES OF SHOTS We see the townspeople just living their everyday lives.
50. BACK TO SCENE Clay explains the opening of the show which is the opening we saw in the pilot. This show has been his script all along. CLOSE ON- TITLE PAGE –
“BASED ON A TRUE STORY” FADE TO BLACK

Based on a True Story Pilot

By

Melody Pinnick

FADE IN:

EXT. ROSE HAVEN - DAY - TELEVISION SHOW

Note: Close on a TV screen for the following though it's not apparent.

An old, faded, but well-kept town sign: "Rose Haven, population 235, Home of Marble Sanatorium."

NARRATOR (VO)

(Over Series of Shots)

A town whose history is riddled with grisly deaths and intense suffering now maintained as a symbol of architectural and human triumph, Rose Haven is a snapshot of a bygone era kept alive by the hard work and dedication of thirty-five descendants of Rose Haven's most ardent mental health reformers."

SERIES OF SHOTS - PEOPLE OF ROSE HAVEN

SUPER: Mark Early, Head of the Marble Sanatorium Museum

-- ACTOR MARK EARLY, early 50's, white, polished, CEO type complete with an expensive suit, sits at a desk filling out paperwork, he looks up with a predatory smile.

SUPER: Cassidy Issacs, Mark's Assistant

-- ACTOR CASSIDY ISSACS, early 20's, low cut top and short skirt, curly red hair, drops papers and frantically tries to pick them all up.

SUPER: Hunter Haven, Events Coordinator

-- ACTOR HUNTER HAVEN, male, early 20's, supermodel good looks, leather jacket and sunglasses in his tousled hair, leans against a door frame smirking.

SUPER: Blaire Grant, Head of IT

-- ACTOR BLAIRE GRANT, male, mid 20's, big glasses and a pocket protector, peaks out from under a desk wires in hand and a screwdriver in his mouth.

SUPER: Jessie Elliot, Janitor

-- ACTOR JESSIE ELLIOT, late 20's, Mexican, generic janitor uniform. He mops a marble hallway without looking up.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - EVENING - REALITY

CLAYTON WATERS, early 30's, a stock photo come to life, the one everybody knows but no one remembers, sits as if on a throne off to the side a few orderly rows of folding chairs in front of a sheet hanging from the ceiling.

He looks around in confusion. The small gathering of TOWNSPEOPLE seated in the chairs in the dim room are all in varying states of distress. Most just stare in shock at the curtain. The lights come on.

JESSIE ELLIOT, 30's, Puerto Rican, in a nice button down and expensive jeans, stands at a projector behind the rows of chairs not making eye contact with Clay.

CLAY

What happened to the feed Jess?

The previously still room bursts to life, people jumping to their feet, converging towards Clay, so many people are talking at once, all seemingly annoyed, it's impossible to decipher anything.

Clay backs up until he runs into the curtain, hands raised in defense. Yelling above the din.

CLAY

HEY! Woah, everybody calm down,
what's going on?

MARK EARLY, early 50's, black, in a cheap suit, with graying hair and bifocals, holds up his hand to quiet the crowd. The roar dies down but people are still muttering to their neighbors.

MARK

(fatherly)

Is that the show you created Clay?

CLAY

Of course that's my show Mark, I
mean you were in it. What's the
issue?

CASSIDY ISSACS, pushing 40, brilliant red hair, sharp pant suit, pushes forward cutting Mark off before he can respond.

CASSIDY

Those "people" are supposed to be us.

CLAY

Supposed to be? I mean yeah I took a few liberties but that's show business guys, come on.

Everyone begins talking at once again. The agitation level is rising. Shouting over the noise, one sentence is discernible.

CLAY

You all should be thanking me.

Clay looks around for help. He looks toward the projector where Jessie was before. Jessie is gone. Cassidy suddenly blocks Clay's view all seething anger and disappointment.

CASSIDY

You're right, thanks for making me a floozie.

INT. JESSIE'S GARAGE - LATER

Clay walks into Jessie's garage straight to the fridge and grabs a beer. Jessie stands at a work bench organizing a drawer in his tool box.

Clay, turning away from the fridge.

CLAY

Man, can you believe how everyone was acting earlier.

He walks over to the work bench and leans against it next to Jessie. Jessie doesn't look up from the tool box.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Crazy, dude, it's just crazy.

He taps on the top of the beer, opening it as he speaks.

CLAY (CONT'D)

I mean talk about ungrateful. I write a whole show about them and instead of thanking me they yell at me?

Jessie drops a wrench into the box loudly, Clay jumps. His beer sloshes SPLATTERING onto the floor.

Jessie softly and silently straightens the wrench so it fits precisely in the box.

Clay chuckles trying to catch Jessie's eye.

Jessie avoids eye contact, he looks down focused on the spill.

JESSIE
I'll get the mop sir.

CLAY
Sir? Come on man, you too?

Jessie walks over and grabs the mop.

JESSIE
(neutral)
Do you really see me as a janitor?

CLAY
You know I don't Jess. It was just creative license.

Jessie glares at Clay. He holds out the mop. Clay takes it confused, the mop in one hand the beer in the other. Jessie crosses his arms and looks pointedly at the spill.

Clay starts to mop awkwardly with one hand.

JESSIE
Half our childhood. Four years at DePaw. Almost ten years of working together.

CLAY
I know, it's just not what the story needed.

Clay stops moping.

JESSIE
You said it was our story....

CLAY
It is. Just...

JESSIE
Don't say creative liberties.

He grabs the mop from Clay's hand, and attacks the spill furiously.

JESSIE
Actually, I could understand the
janitor thing, I'm a neat freak,
whatever, but Mexican?

CLAY
Hey, I didn't...

JESSIE
You didn't have anything to do with
it? You wrote it.

Jessie drops the mop and stalks to the work bench.

JESSIE (CONT'D)
You celebrated Emancipation day
with my family.. We hung the Puerto
Rican flag in our dorm room.

Clay picks up the mop, holding it awkwardly.

CLAY
You're making a big deal out of
nothing. Is there really that big
of a difference.

Jessie spins around, charges toward Clay, and grabs the mop
out of his hand.

JESSIE
Not to you.

Jessie walks over to the work bench. He props the mop up and
goes back to cleaning and organizing his tools.

CLAY
What's that supposed to mean?

Jessie ignores him. Clay walks over to the bench beside
Jessie.

CLAY (CONT'D)
You're going to ignore me now?

Jessie closes the drawer and opens the one below it.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Seriously, are we five again?
Whatever. You know, you're all
ungrateful. I don't know why I
bother.

Clay storms off toward the door. Jessie doesn't look up.

JESSIE
Leave the beer.

EXT. ROSIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Clay paces on the welcome mat of a quaint well kept home. He raises his hand to knock then stops himself, he turns stomping down a cobblestone path lined with flowers, suddenly spins around and stomps to the door knocking loudly.

The door opens before Clay has a chance to put his hand down. ROSIE, late 40's, rock t-shirt and faded jeans, props herself against the door frame, a total hit first ask questions later attitude.

Clay takes a step back all anger suddenly gone.

Rosie looks him up and down.

ROSIE
It's about time you got here.

She heads into the house leaving Clay startled in the entrance. He quickly follows gently shutting the door behind him.

INT. ROSIE'S ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Clay takes his shoes off at the door and pads down the hallway, lined with maps and blueprints in nice frames.

KITCHEN

Rosie sits at a table, toe-sock clad feet propped up in an adjacent chair, a bottle of Jack Daniels a quarter of the way empty on the table next to a 2-liter of Coke and a plastic Marble Sanatorium cup. She holds an almost identical, except for the color, cup and takes a long drink.

Clay walks over and sits across from her. He makes himself a drink.

CLAY
I'm surprised you let me in.
Everyone else seems to hate me.

ROSIE
Can't imagine why.

Clay jerks spilling a bit of his drink off the table. He quickly swipes at it with his sleeve.

CLAY
Come on Rosie, not you too.

Rosie pulls her phone out of her pocket and pushes a few buttons. Showing it to Clay.

ON PHONE- A screen shot from the show's introduction, ACTOR ROSIE HALEY, young, the stereotypical librarian, shoulders hunched avoiding looking at the camera, the words Rosie Haley, town historian, at the bottom of the screen.

ROSIE
The introverted, nerdy librarian?
You didn't even make me cute, man.

Clay pulls out his phone and pulls up a message. He shoves the phone toward Rosie's face.

CLAY
I have *the* Josh Gadge, the big shot producer, telling *me*, my show's a hit.

Rosie takes a sip of her drink, staring at Clay.

CLAY (CONT'D)
This'll be good for the town, for everyone, why can't they see that?

Rosie throws back the rest of her drink and THUNKS her cup aggressively on the table.

ROSIE
Do I look like a quiet reserved librarian to you? You took your friends lives and made caricatures of them that completely erased who they are. And for what, so you can say that you're a success? How is that good for anyone but you?

CLAY
It's not that bad, they're just a few liberties, these kinds of things sell.

ROSIE
Things? You mean your friends?

EXT. ROSE HAVEN DINER - MORNING

Clay walks down the sidewalk toward the diner.

Cassidy, in her usual pantsuit sits at a small table outside sipping a coffee. Across from her is her wife CHARLIE, middle aged in a track suit eating a bagel.

ROSIE (V.O.)
You took the head of the Marble
Sanatorium Museum and made her into
a sexy assistant, half her age.

A WAITRESS, 18, kind smile, comes up to check on Cassidy.

Cassidy looks up and hands her some cash. The waitress smiles and walks away. Cassidy looks after her with a slight frown.

CLAY (V.O.)
The show needed a hot potential
love interest. Besides, how cliché
would it be to have the bitchy
middle aged female boss?

Cassidy sees Clay coming, she grabs her briefcase and gives Charlie a quick peck on the cheek before walking away quickly.

ROSIE (V.O.)
Right, the sexy assistant slash
love interests, completely
original.

CLAY (V.O.)
She's more than -

ROSIE (V.O.)
Oh, does she get to pine for her
handsome boss too?

CLAY (V.O.)
No. Well, yes, but that's not -

ROSIE (V.O.)
So, Cassidy is a bitchy boss and
that doesn't sell like the busty
bangable assistant?

CLAY (V.O.)
No, I mean, of course not, it's
just that...

EXT. PARK - DAY

Clay walks past a small park with a slide and a swing set, it's empty except for Mark sitting on a bench feeding a flock of little birds that hop around him chirping excitedly.

ROSIE (V.O.)

You turned Mark, the guy who bought everyone flowers on Valentines Day, who bakes Snicker doodles, and dresses as Santa every year even though the beard gives him a rash, into an arrogant *white* CEO?

Mark looks up, Clay waves. Mark's face falls, but he gives a half wave in return.

CLAY (V.O.)

He's a main character, what was I supposed to do? An African American lead lends itself to a different demographic then what the producers wanted.

Clay walks a quaint path through a grove of trees. He passes a WOMAN jogging. She flips him off.

He keeps walking rounding a corner, he emerges into the

TOWN SQUARE

ROSIE (V.O.)

I get it, *they* wanted the cliché, or was that your idea?

Clay walks towards the steps of a small courthouse. HUNTER, 20's, hoodie pulled up over his head, headphone strings hanging out of the hood, a backpack on the bench next to him, sits on a bench off to the side of the steps.

ROSIE (VO)

Hunter hasn't taken that stupid hoodie off all day.

CLAY (VO)

Hunter? He has nothing to complain about, who wouldn't want to be cast a freakin' supermodel bad boy?

Clay walks past Hunter who is still entirely hidden by his hoodie.

ROSIE (VO)
 Maybe the self conscious broke
 college kid who has a crush on
 Blaire?

Clay walks around the square, most people who see him ignore him completely, a few give him a dirty look.

CLAY (VO)
 Then I did him a favor, girls love
 bad boys.

ROSIE (VO)
 Did you do Blaire a favor?

Clay walks toward a small shop

BLAIRE'S GADGETS

As he approaches, BLAIRE, mid 20's, perfect makeup, trendy clothes, seriously pissed off, brushes past Clay, walks into the shop, and switches the open sign to closed.

CLAY (VO)
 I might have been a little off on
 that one.

ROSIE (VO)
 You might as well have ripped her
 degree into pieces. She graduated
 with honors from Purdue and you
 passed off her hard work onto a
 nerdy guy.

Clay walks off with a purpose, gaining speed. He tries to make eye contact with those he passes, no one will look at him.

CLAY (VO)
 I told her how proud I was, we all
 went to her graduation.

ROSIE (VO)
 Then you went and erased her from
 our town.

CLAY (VO)
 No, that's not what I meant. I was
 just trying to sell the story.

ROSIE (VO)
 You certainly sold it, but who's
 story was it?

EXT. JESSIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Clay stands on the sidewalk outside Jessie's house looking through the front room window.

Jessie sits on a couch, hunched over a coffee table covered in papers.

Beside the table he has a big art stand set up with a color coded seating chart.

Clay walks up to the front door and knocks. He shakes his head and walks back to the sidewalk. The curtains are closed on the front room window.

Clay pulls out his phone. He types a text to Jessie.

ON PHONE: "I'm sorry"

INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN - SAME

Clay is leaning on the table staring at Rosie. The bottle of Jack is almost empty and the Coke bottle is nowhere to be seen.

CLAY

I didn't mean it. I just...it's
what everyone else does.

ROSIE

Exactly.

CLAY

But what can I do? The producers
like it the way it is.

ROSIE

The producers don't write the
script Clay.

Clay looks taken aback. Rosie downs her drink, stares at Clay.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Clay, why didn't you write yourself
into the story?

Clay stares at the table swaying slightly. He stands abruptly, with a determined nod he weaves his way toward the hallway.

INT. CLAY'S HOME OFFICE - EVENING

Post it notes, index cards, grainy home printed cell phone pictures of the town and townspeople, arranged chaotically around the room.

Clay, unshaven, in the same clothes as the day before, sits in a little nook in front of a window illuminated by his laptop.

He looks up at the wall in front of him.

On the wall is a large note in the middle of historical documents, printed internet pages, and old pictures that says Jessie's Family History.

He grabs an old newspaper clipping.

CLOSE ON clipping. Headline: Construction begins on Marble Sanatorium, above a blurry picture of five men in front of a huge block of marble. The leftmost man is circled in pen with the words Jessie's family in a hasty scrawl.

Clay puts down the clipping, turns back to his laptop.

On the keypad a post it note is taped.

CLOSE ON: Post it note: Don't mess this up - Rosie

Frantically typing, abruptly stopping, from tense to relaxed. He concentrates on the screen. He reads.

CLAY

Jessie's great grandfather, though part of the team that helped build the master piece that is the marble sanatorium, had to fight to get hired as a part of the maintenance staff.

He shakes his head in disgust, backspacing furiously. He types intently. He nods and looks up at the wall.

He skims the pictures, not finding what he's looking for, he grabs his cell phone. Scrolling through his phone.

ON PHONE: A picture of Jessie and Clay in their early teens, laughing running from Jessie's grandma, in a brightly patterned dress, who shoos them out of the kitchen.

Clay types briefly. Pausing.

CLAY

Grandma Abril made the most amazing Mofongo. A family recipe that won her many friends at church, it meant a lot to her. Just as her Abeula once did for her, she taught us how to make it.

Clay smiles fondly and glances at the picture. He then looks up at the wall.

CLAY (V.O.)

Jessie makes them for my birthday ever year.

Clay types away completely focused.

His phone vibrates next to him. He ignores it, typing away. A CHIME sounds on his computer, he doesn't react.

Clay keeps typing. His phone vibrates again, this time it's a consistent BUZZ.

Clay slams his hands on the keyboard and glares at the phone.

He picks it up. Reading the caller ID he takes a steadying breath.

CLAY

Josh, what's going on?

INT. JOSH'S OFFICE- SAME

A stylish office with pristine furniture, expensive artwork, and awards in places of prominence throughout the room.

JOSH GADGE, late 40's, perfectly groomed in designer clothes, paces in front of a large window with a breathtaking view of a pool and the sprawl of the LA.

MILES KELNER, late 50's, a more approachable version of Josh, relaxes as comfortably as possible in a chair in front of Josh's desk, watching Josh pace bemused.

JOSH

Clayton, my favorite writer. Miles and I just wanted to check in. See how season two was coming along.

CLAY (V.O.)
(excited)
Actually I...

Josh walks to his desk. He shuffles some papers around and types one handed on his laptop.

JOSH
Awesome. Remember, if your first draft of this season is anything like the pilot that landed on my desk we are looking at money in the bank. Can't wait to read it.

MILES
I'm quite excited as well. I have a feeling you're going to do some great things.

CLAY (V.O.)
Of course sir, it's just that...

JOSH
The second part of the biggest hit of the season, Clayton. No pressure. I've gotta go, but get it to me soon, yeah? Later.

Josh hangs up.

INT. CLAY'S HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

CLAY
Josh. Josh?

Clay drops the phone. He clicks a few buttons on his laptop, opening an email.

ON SCREEN: Clay flips between the email screen and script obviously torn. He deletes the email from Josh and goes back to writing.

EXT. JESSIE'S HOUSE- LATER

Clay stands on Jessie's doorstep a script in hand.

Jessie opens the door, Clay shoves the script at him rambling.

CLAY

I know you're mad, I get it. Just,
I wrote the next episode, read it I
promise it's better.

JESSIE

Clean up your own mess, there's no
janitor here.

He closes the door.

EXT. ROSE HAVEN STREETS - LATER

Fuming, Clay storms down the side walk past dark shops,
script clutched tightly in his hand. His phone dings,
stopping, he pulls it out of his pocket.

ON PHONE: Josh Gadge- "We're trending!!!"

Clay beams, he starts to reply.

He catches his reflection in a window, with the low light he
is almost invisible.

He looks between his reflection and his phone then down at
the script. He looks back at his reflection then looks away
quickly.

His shoulders slump and he shuffles off, stuffing the phone
in his pocket, all fire gone. He walks past a trashcan,
stops, holds the script over it ready to drop it.

He sees something in the trash. His grip tightening on the
script, he reaches into the trash and pulls out a magazine.
The actor who plays Jessie fills the cover.

Fire reignited, Clay hurls in the trash and rushes off,
script clutched in his hand.

EXT. ROSE HAVEN STREETS - EARLY MORNING

Barely daylight, Clay creeps up to Jessie's door and places
the script on his welcome mat.

SERIES OF SHOTS - SCRIPT DELIVERY

-- Rosie's doorstep, a script, a few flowers, and a bottle
of Jack.

-- A mail box, script bent and partially hanging out the
front.

-- Another house, Cassidy opens the door dressed in work out gear, she reaches down and picks up the script. On the cover, a post-it: MEETING: COMMUNITY CENTER 6:00 PM. She drops it and closes the door.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - EVENING

The townspeople all stand in the center of a ring of chairs talking amongst themselves.

Clay hides in a corner, looking around. Jessie isn't there. Clay looks at his watch, 6:10. One last look at the door, Clay sighs and shuffles toward the circle of chairs.

Engrossed in their conversations no one notices Clay approach. Clay standing at the edge of the circle, takes a deep breath. He opens his mouth to speak.

Jessie throws open the doors, script in hand, making a beeline for Clay, looking serious. Clay is the center of attention now.

Clay stands his ground but is visibly shaken. Jessie stops right in front of him stone faced. He gives Clay a slight nod and a light tap on the shoulder. Clay grins and slaps Jessie lightly on the back as he walks past him to take a seat.

Jessie sits in a chair. Clay focuses on the rest of the group.

He gestures for everyone to sit, clearing his throat, clearly struggling to speak, he sits. There are a few empty chairs.

Clay, no longer on a throne, but sitting as an equal pulls a notepad and pencil from under his seat.

CLAY

Thank you, all of you. I messed up,
and I'm sorry. I just hope that
together maybe we can fix a bit of
the mess I made.

Holding up the script.

JESSIE

Our story?

CLAY

All of our stories, the real ones
this time.

Clay scans the group, nods, smiles, and determination leave no room for the anger and animosity from earlier. With a smile of his own he clicks his pencil a few times.

CLAY

Alright, who wants to start?

EXT. ROSE HAVEN - SAME

A tour bus comes rolling past the Rose Haven town sign a handful of fans lean out the windows, their cameras out and decked in merchandise from the show.

FADE OUT

Based on a True Story
Episode 2: The Tour Bus

By

Melody Pinnick

FADE IN:

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - EVENING

NOTE: This scene is a continuation from the last episode with a slight time jump.

Clay sits cross legged on the floor, back against a folding chair. He has a pen tucked behind his ear, a spiral bound notebook open on his lap. He is hunched over the notebook writing intensely with a mechanical pencil. His cell phone sits on the floor directly in front of him, recording. Pages of torn notebook pages covered in writing are haphazardly arranged around him with pages from a script intermingled here and there.

The townspeople are all listening intently. Some sitting in the chairs others lying or sitting around the floor in the center of the now disarrayed ring of chairs. Some of them are writing on a script others are typing on their phone. Most just sit with rapt attention as Mark, lounging comfortably in his chair addresses them all.

MARK

So they would basically send people from all over to the asylum, sick people, those born with disabilities, the elderly, it was basically a catch all for the unwanted.

Mark leans forward in his chair, his face lighting up in an ah-ha moment.

MARK (CONT'D)

My Nan was adamant though that, unlike other institutions, we never became a death camp for those with tuberculosis. Actually that's how she and my grandpa met.

He leans back in his chair, getting comfortable once again.

MARK (CONT'D)

Grandpa worked maintenance and general cleanup mostly, but when the tuberculosis epidemic hit he was the body disposal crew.

Everyone looks up at Mark. It's very still. Mark leans forward with a chuckle.

MARK (CONT'D)

I feel like I need a flashlight and a campfire.

CLAY

Bodies? This was a mental hospital right?

MARK

Yes, but with the outbreak everyone was sick, patients, nurses, there wasn't a high survival rate and overcrowding was a serious problem. The only time I saw my grandfather cry was when he talked about that time. He talked about a chute to an incinerator and shoving body after body down, not all of them fully dead.

Mark looks up quickly at Clay and points at his notebook.

MARK (CONT'D)

Sorry, that's a bit dark, I'm not sure if you'll want to use that.

CLAY

It's your story, nothing is off limits.

Mark nods seems to collect himself for a moment.

MARK

Anyway, they met here and fell for each other though my Nan's parents didn't approve. My Nan thought it was because my great grandmother was raised in the Creek tribe before she ran off with my great grandfather and she always kind of regretted her "rash young love fueled decision."

Mark uses air quotes around, "rash young love fueled decision." He chuckles and rolls his eyes caught up in his story.

Clay looks over at Rosie, using an empty seat as a foot rest, she nods at Clay and pulls a pencil out of her bun making a note on the back of the script.

Clay makes a quick note in the margins of his notebook.

ON NOTEBOOK: Talk to Rosie - Creek tribe.

MARK (CONT'D)

She and my grandfather eloped anyway and it was a huge scandal. They both almost lost their jobs for it actually.

CLAY

Why would they lose their jobs

MARK (CONT'D)

Well the sanatorium had a reputation and was well known. Many people believed that because it was constructed of marble it was the best facility. Others believed the marble had otherworldly healing properties. Regardless, it was a pure and respected place and the Overbees who ran it were worried a scandal would tarnish that.

Clay looks up from his notebook, half raising his hand like elementary school all over again.

CLAY

The Overbees? There isn't anyone in town with that name, what happened to them?

MARK

After the reforms, many of the patients set up a life here and families like the Overbees who had opposed the reforms left, or more accurately were run out of town.

CLAY

Okay, interesting. Now, your grandma was a part of these reforms right?

MARK

Yes, and the reforms were for more than just the asylum, they were also for...

Mark is cut off by the community center door flying open, BANGING against the wall.

Cassidy storms into the room, her usual composure in tatters.

CASSIDY

Clayton Waters! What have you done?

Clay looks around, confused and slightly terrified. Pencil still poised above his notebook.

CLAY

What? I didn't...

Cassidy, at the edge of the group, stands staring at Clay.

CASSIDY

There is a busload of fans of *your* show taking selfies and wearing atrocious merchandise wandering around our town.

At the word fans Clay looks towards the doors in slight surprise, which quickly turns to pride. When Cassidy gets quiet he glances back to her grinning.

CLAY

I told you it was popular.

Cassidy glares. Everyone turns to look at Clay, with various reactions from disappointment to anger to his haughty comment. Clay looks away smile fading.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Sorry, I didn't mean it like that. Cassidy, I'm trying to fix it, that's why we're...

CASSIDY

Then you should get out there and take care of your groupies.

She turns and stalks out the doors without a backward glance.

Everyone watches her walk away in stunned silence, but before she can make it to the doors the room erupts everyone heading toward the door.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - CONTINUOUS

The group bursts through the door chattering and looking around. Clay and Jessie are at the back of the group, Clay is still holding his pencil.

The tour bus is little more than a fading set of tail lights, Clay stares after it.

CLAY
This isn't going to be good is it?

JESSIE
(with a bit of bite)
Don't look at me, I'm just the
janitor remember.

Clay looks up worried. Jessie slightly sheepish gives Clay a light punch and a hint of an encouraging smile. Clay gives a cheerless chuckle and puts his head in his hands.

JESSIE (CONT'D)
You should probably try to do some
damage control though.

Clay takes a few breaths, putting on a fake smile he addresses those milling around the front of the building.

CLAY
(to himself)
Damage control, here goes nothing.
(to the room)
Ummm, who wants to go meet their
fans?

EXT. ROSEHAVEN STREETS- EVENING

Clay, Jessie, Mark, Rosie, and a few other townspeople walk down main street towards the town square. They pass a few FANS who don't give them a passing glance, far too busy taking pictures of the town shops most of which are closed and dark, and one GIRL even taking a selfie with a lamppost.

As they get closer to the square the more fans there are. The bus, metallic gray, shining in the setting sun, with "ROSEHAVEN TOUR" flashing across an LCD screen above the windshield, parked haphazardly across an entire section of the square, is in direct contrast with the historic, earthy looking square.

The town crowd from the community center makes it to the edge of the square and stops at the intersection. A MARK FAN, woman, 20's, not looking up from her phone, her shirt has the actor who plays Mark on it with the words "Team Mark" in flowing letters. She also has Mark's face in the center of a heart as her phone case. She walks directly into real Mark.

Mark reaches a hand out to make sure she doesn't fall, but doesn't touch her looking at her fan gear in something close to horror.

MARK
(automatic)
Are you alright?

MARK FAN
Yeah, sorry.

She barely looks up from her phone and keeps walking. Rosie looks from the girl to Mark and starts to walk after her, in total mom lecture mode, mouth open to start ranting. Mark Fan suddenly spins back around. Rosie stops, taken aback.

MARK FAN
Hey! Are you guys locals? Could you tell me how to get to the Marble Sanatorium?

She looks directly at Mark. He looks at her shirt then at Clay for a moment, still reeling and seemingly at a loss for words. He quickly composes himself, clearing his throat.

MARK
I'm sorry, it's closed for the evening.

Mark Fan looks non pulsed for a second, then shrugs.

MARK FAN
That's cool, we'll check it out tomorrow.

She walks off, eyes back on her phone.

Mark looks after her slightly panicked.

ROSIE
(under her breath to Clay)
I could glue it to her face, at least then she'd have a reason for being such a...

Mark turns back toward the group, cutting Rosie off.

MARK
We? Tomorrow? They're going to see me tomorrow.

The group looks around in dawning horror. Clay sets off at a brisk walk towards the bus. The others follow.

They walk through and past groups of fans, interrupting selfies, and dodging questions. They make it to the doors of the bus which are hanging open, from the bottom step Clay looks up to the BUS DRIVER, late 60's, white hair, thick mustache, reclined in his seat reading a book.

CLAY

Excuse me sir. Could you tell me if anyone is in charge of this tour?

BUS DRIVER

That'd be Molly.

He HONKS the bus horn, two long blasts.

The fans look at the bus in confusion, some start to head towards the doors, others just go back to their pictures.

MOLLY, early 40's, PTA mom vibe, bounds over, clipboard in hand. Stopping in from of Clay at the door she smiles charmingly.

MOLLY

Hello, I'm Molly, can I help you with anything?

Before they can answer the bus driver cuts in.

BUS DRIVER

Miss Molly we have to get going to the hotel.

MOLLY

Going to the hotel? Oh, right it isn't just up the road from here, sorry, I keep thinking of the show.

Rosie is looking at Molly as if she just asked for ketchup on her ice cream.

ROSIE

Yeah well this isn't the show, so why don't you round up your little group here in the real world and get to moving.

Molly is taken aback but remains composed.

MOLLY

Of course, it has been a bit of a drive.

Molly pulls out her phone typing a quick message. Pausing she looks up at the group putting on her best smile.

MOLLY

Nice to meet you. Excuse me.

She hits send on her phone and walks up the steps of the bus to stand in front of the driver. The bus roars to life.

Like a scene from a horror movie the fans seem to look up and start walking toward the bus in unison.

The townspeople back up until they are pressed against the window of "The Cuckoo's Nest: Bar and Grill." The restaurant door audibly unlocks and a few people cautiously step out to watch the fans board the bus.

ROSIE

It's like a terrifying cult. Maybe we should re-open the asylum, help sort them out.

Clay's phone rings in his pocket. He pulls it out and answers it.

CLAY

Hey Josh, now's really not...

As Josh talks we watch the fans getting on the bus many of them still taking pictures. All of them on their phone.

JOSH (V.O.)

Clayton, listen these pics of Rosehaven are incredible. This tour idea was just fantastic, we're trending. Also, I looked at the nut house website, that place is fantastic, much better than our green screen stuff. Totally talk to them about letting us shoot there. I'll have my people send over the paperwork. Later.

Josh hangs up. Clay pulls the phone away and stares at it.

CLAY

Shit.

He looks back up at the bus, the last fan boards. Molly checks something on her clip board and nods to the driver. The doors shut. The bus pulls off leaving the townspeople gaping after it. It's eerily silent. Mark grabs Clays arm.

MARK

Team Mark? What does that even mean?

INT. ROSEHAVEN'S FAMILY DINER - LATER

A clean dining room with a mom and pop kind of feel.

Townspeople standing and sitting throughout the room are all talking at once, even Cassidy can't calm them down.

Clay leans against the wall next to Jessie looking like he's about to hurl.

Rosie pushes her way to Clay and drags him into the

RESTROOM

Jessie follows.

ROSIE

Alright big shot, what's the plan?

CLAY

Don't throw up and don't let
Cassidy within hitting distance.

Rosie glares and Clay and Jessie both take a step back.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Or you for that matter. Seriously
Rosie, I don't know. If it get's
out that the show was so off about
everyone we are ruined.

Rosie gives him a, "you want to rephrase that?" look.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Me, it would ruin me. And it could
be bad for the town, we don't know.
The fans could be great for
businesses and we really need
people to care about the
preservation of the sanatorium.

JESSIE

I think it will be very beneficial,
but...

CLAY

They've only aired what, three
episodes? Maybe if we can just play
it up until the season's over?

ROSIE

Or, we could not.

Clay walks over to the sink clinging tightly to the counter.

CLAY

Would it really be that bad to pretend for a few weeks, just until I can get this next season picked up?

ROSIE

Do I need to get you drunk again?

CLAY

I know it's not ideal but if it gets the truth told and helps the town...?

ROSIE

Yeah, you go tell Cassidy that.

Clay stands up straight and walks toward the bathroom door.

CLAY

It's good for the town, it'll help get everyone's story out there, it'll be great for the sanatorium, yeah, she'll get that. Fantastic benefits.

Clay walks out the door still psyching himself up. Rosie follows shaking her head.

JESSIE

But at what cost?

Jessie walks out into the

DINNING ROOM

Clay walks up to Cassidy who has finally restored order. Cassidy is glaring straight at Clay.

CASSIDY

Ah, Clay, let me guess you have another brilliant idea.

CLAY

Well it's more of a request.

He stops next to Cassidy and turns to face crowd, he pauses slightly glancing at Cassidy and takes a slight step away from her.

CLAY

I know this is a bit overwhelming, but this is what the show was for.

(MORE)

CLAY (cont'd)

With the fans we are gaining attention which will be great publicity and business for restaurants and other businesses and especially for Marble.

CASSIDY

At first sure, but what happens when they find out who we really are?

CLAY

Well if we could make it until the end of the season-

CASSIDY

Are you kidding? You want us to play pretend?

CLAY

No, I don't, but what happens if we don't? If we get bad publicity from this the backlash could be awful.

CASSIDY

You're worried about publicity when we're worried about our lives and families.

CLAY

That's what I care about, but the only way I know to tell your stories is if we can make it though this season.

CASSIDY

Tell our stories, like you "told" them last time?

CLAY

No, the real ones...

Clay takes a step back shaking his head looking defeated with his realization.

CLAY (CONT'D)

The one's I'm asking you not to tell or live. I'm sorry.

Clay turns to Cassidy pleadingly.

CLAY (CONT'D)
What are we going to do?

INT. SANATORIUM - MORNING

The room is cavernous, a mix between a cathedral and tomb. High ceilings, walls and floors all of pale marble that gleams in the low light, a dark wood reception desk sits off to the left side of the room near a set of double old oak doors labeled "Gift Shop." Dark benches are placed evenly along the walls of the room, along the back wall is a great marble staircase that splits in two separate staircases going different directions.

By the reception desk Cassidy paces in front of Jessie, Mark, and Hunter. All are impeccably dressed and keep glancing at the sanatorium entrance.

Cassidy stops pacing and leans against the reception desk facing the others.

CASSIDY
So I told everyone else not to come
in today, and before you say
anything, I know it's about to get
busy and most likely quite crazy.

She pauses slightly and gives a brief chuckle. Jessie and Mark smile, Hunter continues to look nervous.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
No pun intended. I know you guys
can handle it. Besides, this
attention will attract more people,
and more importantly, it'll help us
share these stories and carry on
these legacies. So let's do this.

The guys nod and Hunter walks off to the gift shop, Mark walks behind the desk, and Jessie stands beside it. Cassidy walks to the front doors. She takes a deep breath, looks at her watch.

ON WATCH: The minute hand flicks to 8.

Cassidy opens the door.

SANATORIUM STEPS

The handful of fans from last night are all congregated on the large marble steps and small marble veranda. They are once again taking pictures or on their phones. As the doors open they file forward.

Cassidy deftly steps aside and welcomes them in with a smile.

SANATORIUM

Molly is the first one through the door, clipboard in hand, she walks straight up to the desk. The others file in behind her clustering in behind her.

MOLLY

Hello again. We would like to take the tour please.

Jessie, holding a stack of pamphlets, walks through the group passing them out.

MARK

Of course, how many of you are there?

MOLLY

There are fifteen of us. We were also wondering if there was any way we could meet the people the characters of the show are based on.

Mark freezes for a moment and looks at Cassidy who is hovering at the edge of the group between them and the staircase making sure no one wanders off. Standing right in front of her is a MAN, mid 20's, wearing a shirt with actor Cassidy's face on it, every time she glances back at it her smile get sharper. She doesn't notice Mark's look.

MARK

Absolutely. In fact...

Mark walks away from the counter and toward the marble staircase, the group follows. He goes up two of the steps and turns to face them. They huddle around the bottom of the staircase.

MARK

Good morning everyone! Welcome to Rosehaven's Marble Sanatorium.

Clay slips silently in the front door as Mark speaks, nodding at Jessie and getting a death glare from Cassidy, he walks up to the back of the crowd looking up at Mark.

MARK

I'm Mark and I am your tour guide for today.

MARK FAN

So there are two Mark's that work here? That's got to get confusing right.

Mark's smile falters a little and he shakes his head.

MARK

No other Mark works here, just me.

Mark looks across the crowd, many of them are looking at their neighbors in confusion. He then looks back at Cassidy and Jessie. Jessie looks uncomfortable and keeps running his hand through his hair. Cassidy looks murderous. Mark tries to break the tension.

MARK

I know I'm a bit older than my television counterpart, but I assure you I am much more charming.

A few people chuckle.

MARK

I am not the CEO, however, I have been here for thirty years, and my family helped build this place.

MOLLY

Excuse me, I'm sorry to interrupt, but if you aren't the CEO who is?

Mark looks toward Cassidy for approval, she nods reigning in her anger.

MARK

Technically we don't have a CEO, but the person who runs this place is Cassidy.

He gestures toward her as she approaches the steps. Whispers bounce around the room as the crowd process this information. Cassidy stands next to Mark. The man from earlier stands towards the front of the crowd and looks down at his shirt and up at Cassidy surprised.

CASSIDY

Hello, my name is Cassidy Issac's.

MOLLY

Hold on, is this some kind of
prank?

Clay begins to push his way through the crowd and toward the stairs.

CASSIDY

No ma'am this is not a prank.

Cassidy keeps talking but her words are drowned out by a sudden roar of conversation from the crowd. Some people start to walk toward the exit.

Clay makes his way up the steps to stand on the other side of Mark. He waves his arms to get the groups attention. They quiet down slowly.

CLAY

Wait, please don't leave.

Those who were walking away turn back and grudgingly walk towards the group.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Thank you. I, I'm Clay Waters, I
wrote the script for Rosehaven.

More whispers and mumblings.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Please, I realize that you've been
hit with some, interesting
information, and that the reality
of Rosehaven and it's residence
(he gestures towards Mark and
Cassidy.)
doesn't quite match with what
you've been shown.

WOMAN

Damn right they don't.

CLAY

I am so sorry for that. I never
meant to mislead any of you
(turning toward Mark and
Cassidy)
and I certainly never meant for you
to have to... justify your own
existence.

Clay turns back toward the crowd and takes a step down.

MOLLY

Mr. Water's we're fans, we understand creativity and creative license, but I must admit this is a lot.

CLAY (CONT'D)

I understand, and I promise I am working on fixing everything, but please, just go on the tour, allow us to show you the real story. Please.

The crowd seems to be mixed, some people seem eager to go on the tour others are still trepidations.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

Mark, we're all ears.

Clay looks up at Mark who nods smiling. Cassidy just walks away without acknowledging him. He looks out toward Jessie who gives him a thumbs up. He walks the aisle towards Jessie.

Mark walks down the stairs and stands in front of the group.

MARK

Wonderful, let's get these stories going.

EXT. SANATORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Standing in front of the bus, Clay, Mark, Jessie, Blaire, Hunter, and Cassidy all sign autographs and takes selfies with a handful of fans, some fans resolutely ignore Clay, he's beaming regardless.

MARK FAN

Hey, Mark. Our selfie is blowing up on Insta.

MARK

That's lovely, I think.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

There are more people in the room than there were for Clay's meeting. All of the chairs are gone, people mill about and form little clusters. Clay tries to hide in the back of the room. Jessie stands on one side, Rosie on the other.

Cassidy walks in with a small entourage all but her wife CHARLIE who is in work out gear and holding Cassidy's hand, are in all in some sort of business attire. They all look incredibly serious.

CASSIDY

Hello everyone, I am sorry this meeting is happening so late, but after the chaos that has happened over the last few days we need to be prepared for another tour group.

Clay's phone rings, he silences it quickly, still getting a piercing look from Cassidy.

BLAIRE

Cas, all of these people have been sharing pictures of Rosehaven and all of us. Now that people know who we really are do you think they're still going to come?

CASSIDY

I do, they will want to see for themselves, and the show is still popular so we have to be ready.

Clay's phone buzzes repeatedly in his pocket. He pulls it out.

ON PHONE: Missed Call from Josh, 2 New Messages.

Clay opens the messages.

ON PHONE: Text from Josh: This is a PR nightmare. Call me.
NOW

Clay looks at the phone and looks over at Jessie who is listening intently to Cassidy.

Clay's phone buzzes.

ON PHONE: Incoming Call from Josh.

Clay hangs up.

Immediate text response.

ON PHONE: Text from Josh: I'll be there tomorrow.

FADE OUT:

Based on a True Story
Episode 3: Cancelation

By

Melody Pinnick

FADE IN

INT. CASSIDY'S OFFICE - DAY

Bookshelves with an array of books and magazines from old tomes to neatly stacked journals take up the wall behind the large desk. The desk is organized chaos with folders and stacks of paper piled on either side of a closed laptop. A handful of photos are arranged sporadically

Cassidy holds a photo frame sitting primly in her high backed desk chair.

Clay sits across from her a notebook and mechanical pencil flying across the page.

CASSIDY

After we got married there was some tension with some of the investors, but it was easier after going through the initial struggle to get and keep this position.

Cassidy looks up from the photo putting it back on the desk with care.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

Do you think you have enough information for now?

Clay reaches forward toward his phone perched precariously on the desk and stops recording.

CLAY

Absolutely. Thank you again for agreeing to this.

CASSIDY

Don't make me regret it. Again.

EXT. CAFE - MORNING

Clay sits at a small wooden table outside of a cafe, no one else is around. He sips at a cup of coffee staring at his laptop.

Setting the cup down he types away, completely focused.

Hunter without his usual hoodie, in a button up and khakis, walks toward the cafe door, noticing Clay he heads for his table looking determined.

HUNTER

Clay, we need to talk.

Clay looks up startled. Hunter stands looking like he's about to run for it.

CLAY

Hey, Hunter. Sure, what's up?

Clay gestures for Hunter to sit across from him. Hunter shakes his head no, steeling himself as if for a fight.

HUNTER

I thought you were going to fix the show?

CLAY

I am. I'm actually working on it right now.

HUNTER

I saw the episode last night. Cassidy and I... we...

Looking uncomfortable, he can't look Clay in the eye. Clay, finally understanding, looks mortified.

CLAY

I forgot about that storyline. Hunter, I'm so sorry.

HUNTER

Storyline? There's going to be more like last night?

CLAY

That's the original show. There's nothing I can do about this season, it's already written.

HUNTER

Then what are you working on?

CLAY

The real stories. For season two.

Hunter nods in understanding looking sad.

Clay's phone BUZZES. He looks down suddenly worried.

HUNTER

I understand. I just wish it could fix season one.

Shoulders slumped, Hunter shuffles off. Clay looks quickly between his phone and Hunter trying to decide which to answer. He picks up the phone.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - LATE MORNING

Clay, with a backpack on, paces and fidgets on the sidewalk outside of Blaire's shop. An expensive car speeds dangerously around the square stopping in front of Clay. Parking in a no parking zone, Josh steps out of the car. His expensive clothes contrast with the historic square.

Clay rushed forward extending his hand.

CLAY

Josh, hello, welcome to Rosehaven.

Josh ignores Clay's hand and looks around the square.

JOSH

I like our set better.

He turns to Clay, smiling.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Let's go grab some coffee and talk about this PR nightmare.

Clay, taken aback, nods jerkily.

CLAY

Sure, this way.

Clay starts to walk away, Josh locks his car with a CHIRP and pauses looking at Blaire's shop window.

JOSH

Blaire's Gadgets, as in the tech Blaire from the show? Perhaps we should get his take on our social media issue.

Josh moves toward the door, Clay moves to subtly block his way, slightly panicked.

CLAY

I don't think that she's in this morning, maybe we can come back later.

JOSH
She? I thought Blaire was the IT
guy?

CLAY
In the show--

JOSH
(ignoring Clay)
Yes, nerdy, big glasses, that
ridiculous pocket square. The
perfect comic relief. He was one of
the big reasons I was drawn to your
script.

Clay fidgeting uncomfortably, looks down ashamed.

CLAY
That is what I wrote. Which we
should talk about over some of
Miss. Georgina's famous pancakes.

Clay steers Josh away from Blaire's.

CLAY (CONT'D)
I can't wait for you to see the
diner. I think it's going to be a
major set for season two.

JOSH
So you are working on season two. I
was starting to get concerned since
I haven't seen any drafts yet.

Josh pulls out his cell phone, texting and scrolling away.

CLAY
I actually have some drafts in my
bag, I'm excit--

JOSH
That's fantastic. We just need to
get this "misrepresentation" issue
under control and our renewal is
guaranteed.

Clay opens the door to the diner, Josh doesn't even look up
as he walks in.

ROSEHAVEN'S FAMILY DINER

Josh pauses a few step through the door looking around, clearly not impressed.

A small handful of people are scattered around the room.

Clay leads the way to a booth.

JOSH

This is a set for season two? Thank
God for set designers.

Josh slides into the booth.

Clay takes off his backpack and slides in across from him.

ELAINE, a waitress with a kind smile and wearing a small black apron, walks over to take their order.

ELAINE

Hey Clay, the usual?

Clay, smiling, nods and starts to respond, Josh cuts him off looking at his phone again.

JOSH

(dismissive)

Coffee, black and an order of
pancakes.

ELAINE

Sure I'll --

JOSH

I think we can spin these photos to
our advantage.

Elaine walks away. Clay looks after her slightly indignant, Josh turns the phone toward Clay briefly distracting him.

JOSH (CONT'D)

If we can get your people to make
statements about how great the show
is and how much they love the
characters this could even become a
lucrative gimmick.

CLAY

They don't love the characters.
That's why--

JOSH

The publicity is going to make this little speck of a town a household name. Once they realize that they'll be on board.

Elaine places a cup of coffee in front of Josh and Clay. She pulls a handful of mini creamer cups from a pouch on her apron placing them by Clay and walks away. Clay works at doctoring his coffee.

JOSH (CONT'D)

We should get them merchandise. Cassidy with a Team Cassidy shirt. What better way to show support, not to mention the advertising.

He sips at his coffee. Looks at it in disgust and pushes it away. Clay stirs his coffee and reaches for the sugar, looking at Josh like he's gone insane.

CLAY

That's not going to happen. They are appreciative, for the most part, of the increase in tourism, but they are still really angry--

JOSH

We have to change that. Until we do this PR nonsense isn't going anywhere.

CLAY

Shouldn't we be trying to address the issue rather than glossing over it?

JOSH

There isn't an actual issue. With some good pictures, maybe a few interviews, everyone will see this is just good tv.

CLAY

If it really were good, we wouldn't be having this conversation.

Clay stops playing in his coffee looking surprised at himself. He looks at Josh slightly worried but standing his ground.

Josh reaches for his coffee deliberately taking a sip, reevaluating his approach and making Clay squirm.

CLAY (CONT'D)
I think with season two--

JOSH
There won't be a season two if we
don't change public opinions about
season one.

Clay starts to respond. Elaine walks up with their food
placing it in front of them breaking the tension.

ELAINE
Here you go. Does everything look
okay?

CLAY
It looks great Elaine thank you.

ELAINE
Of course, you guys let me know if
you need anything else.

Clay looks up and smiles, Josh carefully pours syrup on his
pancakes.

Clay stares at his BLT and mozzarella sticks lost in
thought.

JOSH
Once we get the townspeople on
board, I could get some crew down
here to take some B-roll of fan and
townspeople interactions.

CLAY
(distracted)
We've only had a handful of people
actually show up.

Clay nibbles absentmindedly at his food.

JOSH
We're only a few episodes in, and
with the pictures and footage
ratings will soar bringing in more.

CLAY
This all hinges on you getting
everyone to pretend they're okay
with all this.

JOSH
It's your job to convince them.

CLAY
I can't do that. It's not fair to ask them to accept their erasure from their own story, even if, no *especially* if it's just for show.

JOSH
If they don't their story, your story, won't exist.

Josh devours his pancakes scrolling through his phone again.

Clay pushes his plate away looking around the diner.

An pair of older men sit in a booth near the door drinking coffee and swapping stories.

Elaine wipes down a counter with vigor.

Clay stares at her looking torn.

CLAY
I don't know what to do.

JOSH
Tell them how great the publicity will be for the town.

CLAY
I did --

JOSH
I have some connections at the Late Show. We can get you on, speak for the town, tease an even better season two.

Clay perks up, hopeful.

CLAY
Exactly, a better season two.

JOSH
Everyone just has to play along until this all blows over.

Clay isn't listening, digging through his backpack. He pulls out folder.

CLAY

I actually have a draft for part of season two. I think it'll solve all the problems.

Clay slides the folder across the table.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - AFTERNOON

Clay and Josh walk back to Josh's car. Clay is holding the folder.

Josh seems to be looking for something, surveying the square.

JOSH

We can get some shots outside this citchy little courthouse. Give it a Mayberry vibe.

Josh pauses briefly to snap a quick picture on his phone.

JOSH (CONT'D)

A few bloggers and some popular social media stars will be here tomorrow morning. Coordinate with some of the main people from the show and set up a time for some interviews and photo ops.

Clay stops walking, confused. They are near Blaire's shop.

CLAY

I thought we were focusing on season two?

JOSH

Of course it's going to be important, but you can't promote a next season until we show how much this town loves the first one.

Blaire exits the shop walking towards them, glaring at Clay.

BLAIRE

If I have to deal with one more tourist asking me if I have
(in a valley girl voice)
"like a nerdy boss or something"
I'm going to lose my mind.

She comes to a stop in front of Clay ignoring Josh entirely.

Josh is taken aback. Clay's chagrin turns quickly to excitement and hope. He capitalizes on the moment.

CLAY

Josh this is Blaire. Blaire--

BLAIRE

The producer right? Good, hopefully you get to see this shit storm in person.

CLAY

Come on, it can't be that bad. I thought you were liking the increase in business?

BLAIRE

It's not worth it. Oh, and you can quote me on that hotshots.

She walks off with the guys stunned staring after her. She calls over her shoulder after a few steps.

BLAIRE (CONT'D)

Welcome to Rosehaven.

Josh turns walking toward his car.

JOSH

I like your Blaire better.

Clay chuckles exasperated.

CLAY

Shit storm. I don't think you want to use that in any of your interviews.

JOSH

You do seem to have your work cut out for you.

CLAY

You saw that, we can't ask them to lie and pretend.

Josh unlocks the car with a CHIRP. He gets it, closes the door, turns on the car with a roar, rolls down the window.

Clay holds the folder out slightly panicked.

JOSH
Then you're through.

Josh grabs the folder and tosses it into the passenger seat.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Figure it out.

He speeds off. Clay steps back quickly. He watches the car for a moment then walks over to collapse on the curb.

CLAY
I thought I had.

INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Piles of papers are strewn around the kitchen except for the kitchen table. Which has a few papers arranged precisely.

Rosie and Jessie sit at the table sipping cups of coffee and looking over a handful of documents. Jessie has a pen out marking on and gesturing to different areas on the pages.

A LOUD KNOCK interrupts them.

ROSIE
(yelling)
Come in Clay.

Clay walks in heading straight for the coffee pot he pours a cup, grabs a spoon and walks to the fringe pulling out some creamer while Jessie and Rosie talk.

JESSIE
The Gentry's don't want to be
associated with the show right now
so they aren't coming. This means
we can combine these table and--

Josh looks up seeing Clay staring guiltily into his coffee. Rosie noticing the pause looks up trying to gloss over the moment. She taps on the papers drawing Jessie's gaze.

ROSIE
We could replace them with the
Lowery's, they're supposed to be
back from their vacation by then.

Clay sits down at the table sipping his coffee and staring at the seating chart.

Jessie writes on the chart and looks up at Clay.

JESSIE
How'd the lunch with Josh go?

CLAY
To paraphrase Blaire, it was a shit show.

ROSIE
(teasing)
Blair certainly has a way with words. Maybe she should have been the writer.

Clay takes a sip of his coffee glaring at Rosie.

JESSIE
Did you give him the new script?

CLAY
Yeah but he doesn't think it'll be enough.

ROSIE
That sounds ominous.

CLAY
He thinks the only real solution is to put a positive spin on everything.

ROSIE
Come on. We aren't having this conversation again.

CLAY
Trust me, I don't want to.

JESSIE
What about your season two tease idea? Marketing it as "the answer to everyone's concerns."

CLAY
I proposed that, and apparently it makes me an idiot.

ROSIE
(teasing)
It's not the only thing.

JESSIE
Come on Rose.

ROSIE
(sarcastic)
Right, because this situation
didn't need any humor.

JESSIE
Did you explain our concerns to
him?

CLAY
Well, he met Blaire, if that wasn't
explanation enough.

Clay chuckles sipping at his coffee. Jessie and Rosie look
at him still concerned.

CLAY (CONT'D)
I told him that you guys wouldn't
go for his ideas.

Clay leans forward fiddling absentmindedly at the corner of
a paper in front of him.

CLAY (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Hell, when he had the script in his
hands I really thought I'd done it.

Rosie reaches over and pats Clay on the shoulder, sharing a
concerned look with Jessie.

JESSIE
So what do we do now?

CLAY
(not making eye contact)
Josh suggested interviews and
wearing some merchandise.

ROSIE
He wants us to wear what?

A LOUD KNOCK distracts Rosie. She glares at Clay, a mix of
anger and disappointment and walks to answer the door.

Clay turns to Jessie entreating.

CLAY
Jess, I know it sounds bad.

Rosie and Mark walk in. Mark, in a suit, carries a small
satchel. Rosie comes in and starts making Mark a cup of
coffee.

MARK

Hey. I'm glad you're both here. I have some files for both of you.

Sensing the tension Mark stops trying to open his satchel. Clay won't make eye contact.

MARK (CON'T)

Is everything okay?

ROSIE

Oh, it's just peachy. Mr. hotshot producer just wants us to sell our souls to the media. Again.

MARK

That certainly wasn't the outcome you were hoping for. I'm sorry Clay.

CLAY

It's not ideal, but it could help us.

JESSIE

Help us how?

Rosie hands Mark his coffee and they both sit at the table, focused on Clay.

CLAY

Well, getting picked up for two is the goal, and the increase in tourists and interest in the sanatorium has been good right? This can help keep it going.

Jessie, Mark, and Rosie all share a "should we tell him?" look.

JESSIE

There was a bit of a boom especially after the first group, but it hasn't been all great.

CLAY

Maybe it can be if we can turn public perception, just for the rest of the season...

(gesturing towards the seating chart)

Maybe it could even get the Gentry's back on board.

MARK

Do you think it's worth it to try?

CLAY (CONT'D)

Well Josh said--

ROSIE

No one gives a shit what "Josh said," what do you say?

CLAY

I don't... He's the big shot, wouldn't he know what's best to do?

MARK

Wait, did he read your new script?

CLAY

No, not yet.

ROSIE

Then what the hell does he know?

Clay's phone buzzes on the table.

CLAY

(reading from phone)

I've got a camera crew coming tomorrow evening around 6:30. Get your people ready.

Clay looks up pleadingly.

CLAY (CONT'D)

It may be our only chance.

ROSIE

Your only chance.

CLAY

Yeah, *my* chance. My chance to fix this mess *I* made. Will you help me?

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - EVENING

A TALL CAMERAMAN sets up lights. A SHORT CAMERAMAN carefully attaches a camera to a tripod.

Clay paces constantly checking his phone.

Rosie, Jessie, and Mark come walking toward him.

ROSIE
I'm ready for my close up.

Clay looks up and smiles half-heartedly.

CLAY
Thanks for coming.

MARK
This is what you need from us to
help you fix this situation, of
course we're here.

JESSIE
Exactly, besides this is your dream
man, we're not about to let you
lose it.

Jessie claps Clay on the shoulder smiling. Mark nods in agreement.

ROSIE
Even though it sucks and we're
about to lie to thousands of
people.

Jessie and Mark look at her in exasperation. Clay still reeling from Jessie's confession struggles to respond. They look at him in concern.

JESSIE
You alright?

CLAY
You're right.

Clay walks quickly over to the Cameramen. Mark, Jessie, and Rosie follow confused.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Thanks for coming, but we're not
going to be doing interviews
tonight.

JESSIE
Clay, what are you doing?

CLAY
What I told you all that I was
going to do.
(to cameramen)
Do you need any help packing up?

TALL CAMERAMAN
No thanks, we've got it.

The Cameramen start packing up, quickly and efficiently.

Clay walks toward the bench, the others follow.

JESSIE
Are you sure you want to do this?

CLAY
I'm sure I don't want you guys to
have to do this.

Clay collapses onto the bench.

MARK
What about the scripts you've been
working on?

Clay puts his head in his hands shrugging his shoulders.

JESSIE
What can we do?

ROSIE
More important question at the
moment, what are you going to do
about Josh?

Clay looks up startled, he'd completely forgotten about
Josh.

CLAY
I guess I'll just have to pray he
likes season two.

Clay gets up walking away from the bench and pacing near the
curb. Jessie, Rosie, and Mark sit on the bench waiting.

Clay watches the cameramen load lights and other equipment
into the back of a SUV. They get in the car and drive off.

Clay paces constantly checking his phone.

Josh drives up parking in a no parking zone against the curb
near Clay.

Clay stops pacing watching Josh get out of the car and walk
toward him carrying Clay's script folder.

JOSH
Where's the camera crew, they said
they were set up?

Josh texts furiously.

CLAY
I told them to leave.

Josh stops texting.

JOSH
What?

CLAY
I'm not asking my friends to lie.

Josh looks toward the bench where the others are sitting,
suddenly patronizing.

JOSH
Clay, it's not lying it's just
putting a positive spin on things.

CLAY
However you word it, I won't let my
friends go through that.

JOSH
So you're just giving up on the
whole project?

Josh slides his phone into his pocket, for the first time
Clay gets his full attention.

CLAY
No, we still have season two--

JOSH
(holding up the folder)
You mean this?

He hands the folder back to Clay.

JOSH (CONT'D)
This isn't the show we bought.

CLAY
Yes it is, just the true version,
not the Hollywoodized one.

JOSH

Regardless, it's not going to cut it. So let's focus on salvaging this season.

CLAY

Focus on exploiting my friends, my town? How many times do I have to say no.

JOSH

Clay, you have to stop letting them cloud your judgment, this show is important. Your friends should be grateful.

Clay takes a step back reeling.

CLAY

Grateful?

(to himself)

I can't believe I ever sounded like that.

JOSH

What? You know what, it's fine, I'll just call the camera crew back, we'll get these interviews done and be back on track okay.

Josh pulls his phone out of his pocket.

Clay all doubt gone, squares his shoulders staring straight at Josh.

CLAY

No. I can't, I won't, make things right by pretending there isn't a problem.

JOSH

I can't believe you've bought into the absurdity. The problem is with public perception and that's what we are trying to change.

Clay starts to walk towards Josh's car shaking his head.

CLAY

If you can't see the real problem, maybe it's because you're a part of it.

JOSH
(fuming)
You're right there is a problem
here, it's you. Well done *Mr.*
Waters, your days in the industry
are officially over.

Josh gets into his car.

CLAY
Better that then selling out my
friends and myself.

Josh slams the door starting the car with a roar rolling
down the window.

JOSH
You've already done that, I only
brought your story to the world.
You should--

CLAY
You're right, and they have every
right to hate me for it.

Clay glances toward the bench for the first time not guilty
or ashamed and then leans in toward Josh's window staring
him in the eye.

CLAY (CONT'D)
They deserve better than both of
us.

Clay looks away toward the bench walking away from and
ignoring Josh.

JOSH
They hate you, but you'd choose
them over the fame and success.
You're insane.

Josh speeds away.

CLAY
Yeah, I choose them.

Looking at the script in his hand.

CLAY (CONT'D)
I just hope it's enough.

CLOSE ON A LAPTOP SCREEN.

A female NEWS ANCHOR, sits behind a desk.

A picture of the Rosehaven town sign from the show floats above her shoulder.

NEWS ANCHOR

In TV news, the hit show Marble Asylum has been canceled after only a handful of episodes amidst serious controversy over misrepresentation. The show marketed as "based on a true story" was --

CUT TO BLACK

Based on a True Story
Episode 4: The Pitch

By

Melody Pinnick

FADE IN:

INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN - EVENING

The kitchen is clutter free. Rosie sits with her feet propped up in the empty chair, flipping through a book, occasionally jotting down notes.

Clay scrolls through his phone looking dejected.

Jessie shuffles a deck of cards absentmindedly.

A LOUD KNOCK, breaks the silence.

ROSIE
(yelling)
Come in.

Rosie closes the book, getting up, she grabs the book and her notepad putting it on the counter.

Mark walks in. In a pair of jeans and a t-shirt he carries a bag of pretzels.

CLAY
No matter how many times I see you
without your suit, it's still super
weird.

MARK
I have to get comfortable for all
of the winning I'm about to do.

JESSIE
(chuckling)
Oh, the game has started already,
okay.

They all get comfortable around the table. While they talk, Mark hands out an equal number of pretzels to each person while Jessie shuffles the cards dealing them.

CLAY
How'd the meeting with the
preservation society go?

MARK
Wonderfully. They approved our
request to repair the seals around
the windows, and even offered us
some funding.

JESSIE
It's about time too. The heating
bill this winter would have
destroyed us.

They start playing a hand of Texas Holdem using the pretzels
as poker chips.

ROSIE
Just like this beautiful hand I
have is about to do.

MARK
Beautiful hand huh? I think you're
bluffing.

JESSIE
Rosie, did I tell you we received
those pictures from the private
collector to showcase at the
benefit.

ROSIE
Good. I was getting worried he'd
chicken out at the last minute.

MARK
Alright, show them.

Every shows their cards. Clay's phone buzzes, he checks it.
Jessie wins the hand and rakes in his pretzel winnings.

Clay looks at his phone crestfallen.

MARK
Clay, everything okay?

CLAY
(dejected)
I'm fine.

ROSIE
Has anyone ever said that and meant
it?

JESSIE
Oh he totally means it Rosie, just
look at that frowning face, that is
totally the look of someone who is
fine.

Clay rolls his smiling slightly.

MARK

Are you going to tell us what's going on or are you going to make us suffer through more of these two?

Jessie and Rosie pretend to be offended. Clay chuckles softly then sighs.

CLAY

It's nothing really, just another notification about the cancellation.

MARK

You've set up notifications for that?

ROSIE

(sarcastic)

That's incredibly healthy.

CLAY

I just like knowing what's being said.

MARK

Does it impact your decision about what you're going to do moving forward?

Mark collects all the cards, shuffling quietly as he listens.

CLAY

I mean it's certainly a factor.

JESSIE

What about the script you were going to use for season two? Couldn't it be an entirely new show?

Clay absentmindedly organizes the pretzels in front of him.

CLAY

Well between the cancellation and the media fallout not to mention the way I ended things with Josh, no one in the business is going to want anything to do with me.

ROSIE
Of course, why risk it with so many
obstacles in front of you.

CLAY
That's not what I meant.

Turning to Mark she ignores Clay entirely.

ROSIE
It's like he's learned nothing. The
experience, the interviews, was he
asleep during all this?

CLAY
I get it Rosie. I don't want to
give up, I just don't think it's
enough.

JESSIE
Then make it enough.

CLAY
How? I don't even know where to
start.

JESSIE
Make your script irresistible, and
don't let people ignore what you
need to say.

ROSIE
Also, turn off those stupid
notifications. That's the past,
you're working toward the future.

Clay munches on a pretzel, overwhelmed.

CLAY
I don't know.

MARK
You really just have to ask
yourself, is this what you want,
and is it worth the struggle.

Clay nods in reflection.

ROSIE
Well while you soul-search let's
get this game going I have pretzels
to win.

Clay looks up at Mark with a smile.

CLAY
Deal me something good.

INT. CLAY'S HOME OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON A LAPTOP SCREEN

A female NEWS ANCHOR, sits behind a desk.

A picture of the Rosehaven town sign from the show floats above her shoulder.

NEWS ANCHOR
In TV news, the hit show Marble
Asylum has been canceled after only
a handful of episodes amidst
serious controversy over
misrepresentation. The show
marketed as "based on a true story"
was --

The clip pauses.

BACK TO SCENE

Clay stares at the screen forlorn. Suddenly he looks away from the screen, lost in deep thought.

With a frenzy he turns back to the laptop closing the video.

CLAY
(under his breath)
Make it irresistible.

He starts typing quickly. Pausing, he grabs his phone and Blaire's voice fills the room.

INT. BLAIRE'S SHOP - DAY

Blaire sits at a desk strewn with tools, computer parts, and wires.

She works intensely on a small circuit board as she talks.

Clay balances a notebook on his knee as he perches on a small plastic chair.

BLAIRE
I've loved electronics since I was
a kid. Taking things apart and
putting them back together is
incredibly soothing, and fun.

CLAY

Do you think your dad and this shop
had anything to do with that love?

BLAIRE

Of course. He was so encouraging.
He gave me most of the gadgets I
took apart, and helped me when I
struggled with them.

Blaire looks up, gesturing around the room.

BLAIRE (CONT'D)

It probably helped that I had a
gadget shop named after me as well.

Clay jots in his notebook. Blaire goes back to work.

CLAY

(chuckling softly)

Yeah I bet. What about programming
what drew you to that?

BLAIRE

Besides the fact it's crazy cool?
It was just a logical extension of
what I was already doing.

Blaire glances up, but focuses back on her task quickly.

BLAIRE (CONT'D)

(slightly accusing)

Also, the idea of breaking into a
"man's" field was too good to pass
up.

Clay pauses, looking ashamed.

CLAY

(floundering)

You were excited about the
challenge?

Blaire looks up suddenly serious.

BLAIRE

I was excited to show people that
it shouldn't be a challenge just
because I'm a girl.

Clay stops writing. He leans forward, sincere.

CLAY

I'm sorry. What I wrote, the impact it had on you and your message--

BLAIRE

Not just me. The impact our actions and words have go much farther than each other or the borders of this town.

Blaire turns back to the circuit board letting Clay sit and process what she said.

He writes quickly in his notebook, underlining with vigor.

CLAY

Maybe Rosie was right and you should have been the writer.

INT. CLAY'S HOME OFFICE - LATER

Clay types away like a madman. There are a few notebook pages and post it notes scattered around him.

He pauses typing grabbing his phone.

He sets the phone down, Clay's voice fills the room.

EXT. ROSEHAVEN'S FAMILY RESTAURANT - EVENING

Clay walking out of Blaire's shop carrying his notebook and tucking his phone into his pocket, looks up seeing Hunter in his accustomed hoodie exiting the diner.

Hunter starts walking towards Clay looking at his phone.

CLAY

Hey, Hunter, do you have a quick second?

Hunter looks up startled. Clay pulls the phone out of his pocket, walking quickly to meet up with Hunter who walks quickly to meet him. They stop on the sidewalk close to Blaire's shop.

HUNTER

Hey, what's up?

CLAY

I had a couple follow up questions from our interview.

He opens his notebook clicking his pencil.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Do you mind?

HUNTER
No, go ahead.

CLAY
Actually, they're kind of about
Blair.

HUNTER
(hesitant)
I guess that's okay.

Clay looks quickly at his notes.

CLAY
We talked about how my description
of you as a model impacted your
mental health, specifically your
anxiety. We didn't really talk
about how it affected you
relationships.

HUNTER
My relationship with Blair
specifically?

CLAY
Sure, that would be good.

HUNTER
Is this some clever way of asking
me if I like Blair?

CLAY
I know you like Blair so that
would be kind of redundant.

HUNTER
(slightly panicked)
Oh. So, you're really going to talk
about this in your new show?

CLAY
Maybe, and only if it's okay with
you.

Hunter looks away thinking hard. He looks back at Clay
nodding resolutely.

Hunter opens his mouth to speak the TINKLING of a bell interrupts him.

Blaire exits her shop, locking up behind her.

CLAY
You know, a good way of pushing
yourself would be to talk to her.

Clay looks terrified. Blaire looks over and waves at them and starts walking in the opposite direction.

Hunter stares after her walking towards her seemingly without realizing it. He breaks into a slight jog catching up to her quickly.

HUNTER
Hey, could I, would it be okay if I
walked you home?

Blaire looks up smiling brightly.

BLAIRE
That would be great.

She loops her arm through Hunter's.

Clay watches them walk away.

CLAY
That's a good start.

INT. CLAY'S HOME OFFICE - LATER

Clay sits cross legged on the floor his computer in his lap holding a highlighter and printed website page. Surrounded by notebook pages, Post-it notes of various colors, empty soda and coffee cups, and some printed script pages, he attacks the paper he's holding with the highlighter.

Sitting them aside he moves papers around looking for his phone.

Picking it up, he pushes a button and prepares to type.

This time, Elaine's voice fills the room.

INT. ROSEHAVEN'S FAMILY DINER - AFTERNOON

Clay sits alone at a booth munching on his BLT and cheese sticks.

His notebook, pencil, and phone sit on the table ready.

Elaine walks up, in a t-shirt and black pants. Clay gestures for her to sit down his mouth full. He pushes a button on his phone.

ELAINE

So, you want to include my family
in your show.

Clay takes a drink of his tea struggling to clear his mouth so he can speak.

CLAY

Absolutely, I came across your
family's name in some of the
records Rosie gave me, and I was
curious if you could give me some
more information.

ELAINE

I can try, what do you want to
know.

CLAY

The records just had your ancestors
down as Indian, there was no tribal
designation, do you know what tribe
you're descended from?

ELAINE

We are descendants of the
Chickasaw. When they were forcing
our people West, a few members
decided to cut ties with the tribe
to keep their homes and land. My
ancestors were one of those people.

CLAY

Does that mean you and your family
aren't considered a part of the
Chickasaw tribe?

Clay scribbles furiously in his notebook. He barely looks up.

ELAINE

I'm not entirely sure how that worked, but I do know that we are a part of the Cherokee tribe.

CLAY

I feel like I've missed something.

ELAINE

Right. Sorry, I'm not great at explaining all of this.

CLAY

No worries. Just give it a shot and I'll ask questions if I get confused.

ELAINE

Basically, after the Trail of Tears, some of the survivors traveled back hoping to find better success at survival and reconnect with their land and identity. My couple greats grandfather, a full-blooded Cherokee, was one of them. On his way, he met my Chickasaw grandma.

CLAY

They settled here?

ELAINE

No, they moved East. One of their sons or maybe grandsons came here for work. He's probably the one in your records. His son married a Cherokee woman who had been a patient at the Sanatorium before the reformation.

Elaine reaches over and steals one of Clay's mozzarella sticks.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

It will be really nice to have our stories told, but why do you want to know any of this stuff?

CLAY

The town is just as important as the people in it. I want to understand it's history so I can understand all of you.

ELAINE
What about you?

CLAY
What do you mean?

ELAINE
Well you're a part of the town too,
shouldn't part of this be about
understanding yourself.

Clay, suprised, looks down at his notebook.

CLAY
It's bigger than me.

ELAINE
Yeah, but that doesn't make you
unimportant. Just like none of us
are. Besides you're the one telling
the stories.

CLAY
I suppose so.

Clay looks down, he turns to a blank notebook page. He
writes the word, me.

CLAY (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Understanding myself. I think
that's it.

INT. CLAY'S HOME OFFICE- DAY

Clay slumps in a chair, exhausted and disheveled. All the
pages and notes are gone. He clicks away at the keys then
slowly shuts the laptop.

Standing up, he sets the laptop in the chair and staggers
toward the door.

A LOUD KNOCK, causes him to groan and stop walking. He leans
against the wall.

Another LOUD KNOCK.

CLAY
(quietly)
Alright, I'm coming.

Clay rubs at his face and starts forward, just as he reaches
his office door it opens.

Rosie stands in the doorway with a stack of mailing envelopes, a roll of stamps, and a cup of coffee.

ROSIE
You should lock your door.

She hands the coffee to Clay. He grabs it out of reflex.

ROSIE
Come on, let's get these scripts out.

CLAY
Can't this wait? I just want to sleep.

ROSIE
You're the one who asked me to show up with all this stuff. Now I'm here, let's get to it.

Clay takes a long drink of his coffee.

CLAY
When we talked about obstacles and struggles, I never thought to put you in those categories. I see now I have made a mistake.

ROSIE (CONT'D)
When I said I'd help you "make things right" this was not on my list either so welcome to the club.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - MORNING

Cassidy stands in front of a handful of townspeople reading from a list on a clipboard.

Blaire and Hunter sit next to each other. Hunter keeps looking at Blaire smiling.

Rosie and Jessie sit next to Clay behind Mark. Clay looks dejected, constantly checking his phone.

CASSIDY
Next order of business, Jessie could you come up here and talk to us about the benefit last night.

Jessie walks up front while Cassidy takes a seat by Charlie.

JESSIE

The benefit was successful, we met our fund raising goal, and plans are already underway to utilize some of that money for some local advertising.

Jessie looks and talks directly to Clay.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

We also had the Gentry's agree to attend as well as garnered support and requests from other historic landmarks in the state to do joint events.

Clay gives a slight smile but remains melancholy.

Jessie walks back to his seat and Cassidy takes her place at the front.

CASSIDY

I thought the event was incredible, thank you Jessie and everyone for all your hard work.

Cassidy looks down at her list.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

It seems that our slight tourism boom has evened out with the beginning of this news cycle. I'm going to open the floor for discussion on this topic, please stand up and address the room.

Cassidy sits down, Blaire stands up.

BLAIRE

The businesses on the square and on main street are doing alright. In fact, many of us are happy not to have to answer questions about our drastically different alter egos.

Many of the townspeople nod and chuckle slightly.

Blaire sits down and there is a brief silence before Cassidy stands up.

CASSIDY

Anyone else wish to comment?

She looks around the room.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
Wonderful. Speaking of our alter egos, Clay would you like to tell us a bit about what's happening with your new script?

Clay stands up begrudgingly addressing the room, Cassidy remains standing at the front.

CLAY
I really appreciate all of your support and patience, but I'm afraid I still haven't found anyone willing to take on the project.

Clay sits down dejected.

ROSIE
Don't give up, someone in the industry is going to recognize the great things you're doing.

Clay looks up suddenly. He grabs Rosie and hugs her.

CLAY
Great things, that's it.

Clay jogs outside scrolling through his phone, leaving the others looking after him in confusion.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Clay puts the phone to his ear pacing.

He looks towards the sky like he's praying.

CLAY
Hello? Yes, this is Clayton Waters, I was hoping to set up a meeting with Miles Kilner.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - ELEVATOR- AFTERNOON

Clay in dress pants and a suit jacket fidgets nervously with a folder, filled to bursting, in his hands.

The elevator DINGS softly and he steps off.

OFFICE HALLWAY

Clay walks determinedly towards a set of double doors at the end of the hallway. He glances at other office doors as he passes.

Suddenly he stops in front of door with the name plate JOSH GADGE in gold letters.

Clay takes in a shaky breath and walks forward without looking around.

He pushes the doors open gently and steps into the

RECEPTION AREA

A few comfortable chairs are lined along both walls. Potted plants brighten the room.

SAMANTHA CREER, a young woman in a bright flowing blouse, sits behind a small desk with a small name plaque on the front. She looks up and smiles at Clay when he walks in.

SAMANTHA

You must be Mr. Waters. I'm
Samantha. I'll let Miles know
you're here, please take a seat.

She types quickly at her computer. Clay barely sits down before she speaks again.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

He's ready for you, go on in.

Clay gets up looking slightly worried but he plasters on a smile and walks through a door beside Samantha's desk.

MILES' OFFICE

Bookshelves with binders, magazines and books line the walls. One shelf off to the side has a number of awards jammed next to each other.

Miles sits behind a large mahogany desk, dressed in a sweater and dress slacks, he stands up to shake Clay's hand.

MILES

Mr. Waters, it's nice to finally
meet you. Please have a seat.

They both sit down. Miles relaxes into the chair. His phone is face down on the desk and a large folder is open in front of him.

CLAY

Likewise sir. Thank you for agreeing to meet with me.

MILES

It's my pleasure. I'm looking forward to hearing your pitch.

CLAY

Of course.

Clay opens the folder in his hands then closes it looking up at Miles.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Before I do that, may I ask, why did you agree to meet with me?

MILES

I read your original draft of your first show. While problematic, I saw something worth taking a chance on. I think I'm about to find out if I was right.

He gestures to the folder in Clay's lap with a sweet smile. Clay smiles back relaxing. He launches into his pitch with vigor.

CLAY

This is a story about a writer who fell prey to the easy way of doing things, giving in to the temptation of fame and money. It's his, my, journey of realizing and admitting I was wrong and trying to fix my mistakes not for myself, but for those I hurt.

Miles, stares at Clay stoically.

MILES

Josh was right.

Clay looking away to hide his disappointment. Looks up quickly as Miles leans toward him. He's smiling.

MILES (CONT'D)
 You are bringing us a major hit.
 Please tell me more.

Clay laughs and opens the folder again.

CLAY
 I actually have the first four
 episodes here. They show not only
 the writers journey, but the
 importance of the stories of his
 friends and community as well.

SERIES OF SHOTS

-- Rosie and Jessie sit in a booth eating lunch and
 laughing. Elaine comes over to fill their coffee cups
 laughing with them.

-- Mark sits in the park in his suit feeding the birds.

-- Cassidy walks down the Sanatorium steps to Charlie who is
 leaning against an SUV.

-- Blaire and Hunter walk hand in hand past the court house.

BACK TO SCENE

CLAY
 It opens with the image of an old,
 faded, but well-kept town sign that
 reads. "Rose Haven, population 235,
 Home of Marble Sanatorium."

He looks down at the folder in his hand open to the title
 page of a script.

CLOSE ON TITLE PAGE: "Based on a True Story"

CLAY (V.O)
 I call it, "Based on a True Story."

FADE OUT